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Foul Ball: My Life and Hard Times Trying to Save an Old Ballpark, Part 2

By Jim Bouton

Link Feedback

problems: the parking lot floods when it rains, the plumbing is held together with tape and chewing gum, the locker rooms are cramped, there are no exercise facilities, and the sun shines in the batters' eyes, causing "sun delays," which can hold up a game for ten minutes.

Having done our homework, Chip and I matched their enthusiasm: the flooding might be alleviated by lowering a dam downstream from the park, the plumbing could be repaired or replaced, the locker rooms could be expanded, and the "sun delay" could be sold as the quirky feature of a historic ballpark, just as Fenway Park's "Green Monster" turns a short left field into a marketing asset.

They smiled tolerantly at us. Hadn't we been listening?

Chip and I energetically challenged their "economic development" theory. We cited studies that showed there is no economic benefit to having a new minor league baseball stadium. Zero. Zip. Nada. We said we would restore Waconah Park at no cost to the taxpayers, and that the city could spend the \$18.5 million on a completely different reason for people to come to Pittsfield. And furthermore, if they decided to build an arena instead of a stadium, we could provide a hockey team. We explained that our partner Eric Margenau was president of United